

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members, I want to follow up the line of reasoning that Senator Vickers just started. I have one of the nicest and newest research facilities in the state located outside of Clay Center, Nebraska, at the Roman Hruska Animal Research Center and I visited that center this last summer and they have some of the best facilities that I have ever seen for research and working with animals and unfortunately they are drastically, I think, understaffed. I believe that they have right now something like a dozen scientists out there and that facility has something between 50...was built with the thought of funding or staffing that facility with something like 50 to 70 scientists. And I know this is a cooperative effort between the federal and state government but I'd like to point that out that we do build facilities in this state and then fail to fund them adequately enough to staff them and buildings don't necessarily mean that we are going to get any research done at those facilities. So, Senator Vickers has brought up a key point that I would like to reiterate on, that it is very important that we do something in this particular area. We've got the facilities out there, the diagnostic centers at North Platte and Scottsbluff and we have the research facility west of Clay Center there at the Roman Hruska Center. I think that a lot of these facilities are there but they are lacking in the personnel and the necessary funding to really do the job that they were established for and that is to provide the type of research and as Senator Vickers pointed out, we seem to have some lack of ability to set priorities on those projects that we feel this state should be following up on and I think that this particular project or these particular projects should receive some type of priority in our system when we were trying to designate where we are going to fund and what programs we are going to fund. So with that I applaud Senator Vickers for bringing up that particular point and as he said, I guess half a loaf is better than nothing but I do think that we need to start getting in one way or another to recognize the fact that agriculture and livestock are the backbone of the society and that we need to put a greater priority on those particular projects which are hopefully helping and improving this state's livelihood.